

N E W S R E L E A S E

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\$15 MILLION GRANT LAUNCHES CALIFORNIA SPACE ENTERPRISE PROJECT

EL SEGUNDO - The California Space Authority, along with more than 60 partners in industry, government and education in California's "Innovation Corridor," today launched a three-year, \$15 million initiative to develop a highly-skilled and well-paid workforce capable of competing at a world-class level in the global economy of the 21st century.

"California leads the world in innovation, from Silicon Valley's high-tech pioneers of the 1970s to the cutting edge developers of the Internet and biotechnology industries today," said Victoria Bradshaw, Secretary of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. "The California Space Authority initiative will ensure that we continue to lead the world – by supporting the creativity of a new generation of entrepreneurs and by training a workforce that can adapt and succeed in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive world economy."

Governor Schwarzenegger submitted the California Space Authority's "Workforce Transformation" proposal to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) in January, and last month DOL selected the initiative as one of 13 projects nationwide to receive a WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) grant.

"California's Innovation Corridor was chosen to participate in this national initiative because of its excellent potential to develop the region's workforce talent and create high-skill, high-wage jobs for its citizens," said Emily Stover DeRocco, the U.S. Department of Labor Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training. "With WIRED, the state's rich history of aerospace innovation will continue to change the way Americans do business in the classroom, on the launch pad and in space. WIRED is an expression of President Bush's belief that developing and applying the American people's skills in productive and innovative ways are critical to keeping our nation competitive in the global economy."

The WIRED program encourages the creation of regional partnerships to develop the highly-skilled workforce needed to attract and sustain economic development. The CSA-led initiative creates a regional partnership in 13 counties – Alameda, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino and Kern Counties – titled the California Innovation Corridor.

"The WIRED grant provides California with the opportunity to develop the technical workforce necessary to meet ever-growing international competition," Andrea Seastrand, executive director of the CSA, said. "We at the California Space Authority recognized workforce needs in our Strategic Plan and now see a meaningful way in which to prepare our workers for innovation, entrepreneurship and the production of technological goods and services essential to our economy. We and our partners are pleased to have been entrusted with this important responsibility."

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Representatives of CSA and its more than 60 partners came together today for a kick-off press conference at a small aerospace engineering firm, Microcosm, Inc. in El Segundo. The event was followed by the beginning of a two-day meeting at the Four Points Sheraton at Los Angeles International Airport to begin the hard work of turning their initiative into reality. Victoria Bradshaw and Emily DeRocco opened the meeting.

Representatives of the federal Employment and Training Administration offered participants information on federal resources available for the initiative. The sessions also included an overview of the WIRED program and planning efforts for the Innovation Corridor's first six months of activity.

The Innovation Corridor is an economic paradox. It has a wealth of world-class research centers and technology companies, but limited support for entrepreneurial advancement. In addition to the need for greater financial support for further developing new ideas, the 13-county region has also experienced a decline in manufacturing jobs. That creates an opportunity to re-train workers in new skills and transform manufacturing to meet new technology demands.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger requested WIRED funding for the CSA initiative as a way "to advance our shared 'Demand Driven' vision for the workforce system." The initiative focuses on answering those demands by identifying three main strategies for training highly-skilled technical workers, creating the next generation of innovators, and transforming industries so they can quickly bring technological innovations to the marketplace.

The project's strategies are supported by a unique regional collaboration of academia, private enterprise, and government workforce development resources. All partners on the WIRED "Workforce Transformation" project are working to create an efficient space enterprise that can be a catalyst for economic growth across industries, and to retain California's leadership in a global economy.

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